

# THE MOUNT

Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles ♣ Winter/Spring 2013

## Applied Science

*From teachers to engineers, alums share their passion for STEM*



Ready to Run ♣ Women's Leadership ♣ Outstanding Alums

# *from the president*

Dear Friends,

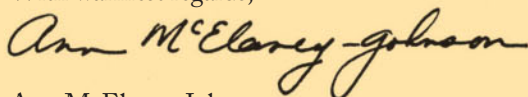
As last year's publication of the Mount St. Mary's College Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™ demonstrated, significant gender gaps still exist in our society. One of the findings in the 2012 Report demonstrated that far fewer women than men earn degrees in computer sciences, engineering and math, all of which number among the fastest-growing and highest-paid careers. At the Mount we have made increasing the number of women in the STEM disciplines a priority, and in this issue, you will see several examples of Mount graduates who are excelling in these areas.

Those of you who are alums or friends of Weekend College know the dedication Dean Merrill Rodin has for the program. Joan Johnson, an instructor in the English department, has contributed a wonderful reflection about Merrill, and I am pleased to announce that the College is establishing a scholarship in his honor for adults striving to achieve their dreams of a college education through the Weekend College.

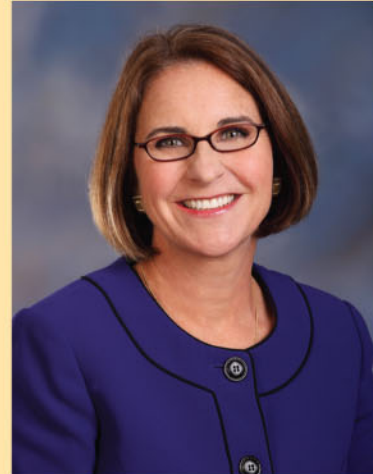
These are exciting times for Mount St. Mary's College. Several events are happening in March, including the Critical Teaching in Action conference, the Women in Public Service Project's Institute for Women Leaders of Latin American, and the release of the second annual Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™. We will include recaps about all of these programs in our next issue, as well as an update on the strategic planning process. You may also access current videos and photos of these events on our website.

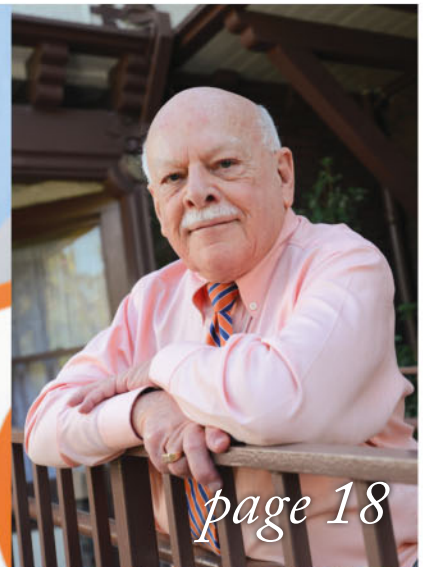
While we enjoy sharing the latest news and innovations at the Mount, please know that we also want to hear from you, our friends and alums, about your achievements and life moments. Share news and photos of milestone anniversaries, engagements, weddings, births and significant trips with our Alumnae Relations office at [alums@msmc.la.edu](mailto:alums@msmc.la.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

With warmest regards,



Ann McElaney-Johnson  
President





## Applied Science

Mount alums help stir the passion for math and science among the next generation of girls.

*page 10*

## Bravo, Dean Rodin!

English instructor Joan Johnson writes about Weekend College Dean Merrill Rodin and his career as a child actor.

*page 18*

## Outstanding Alums

This year's award winners range from an artist and educator to community advocates.

*page 26*

ON THE COVER:

Christina Solis '98 at Los Angeles Academy Middle School  
Photo by Carrie Rosema

page 3  
College News

page 4  
From the Faculty

page 20  
Advancing the Mission

page 22  
Alum Community

page 27  
Reflections

page 28  
Calendar

page 29  
From the Archives





Photo: Glenn Marzano

## Found in translation

When Mexico's first female presidential candidate asked Claudia Garcia '13 to translate for her after a speech in Los Angeles, Garcia did not hesitate. "How could you say no to such an amazing and inspirational woman?" Garcia says.

Josefina Vázquez Mota, the National Action Party candidate during Mexico's 2012 presidential election, was the guest of honor during a dinner in November celebrating the upcoming Women in Public Service Project's Institute for Women's Leadership in Latin America.

Garcia was one of several Mount St. Mary's and Scripps College students, along with faculty and community representatives, who were invited to the event. During the question-and-answer portion, Garcia noticed Vázquez Mota staring at her. "It wasn't until she said my name and asked me if I could translate a couple words for her that I knew it was not just my imagination running wild," Garcia says.

When the above photo was taken, Garcia remembers thinking, "I wish my parents could be here to share this with me." It was a moment Garcia will never forget. ♣

*Mount St. Mary's College and Scripps College are co-hosting the inaugural Institute for Women's Leadership in Latin America this March. Read more about the institute on Page 5.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

Mount St. Mary's College offers a dynamic learning experience in the liberal arts and sciences to a diverse student body. As a Catholic college primarily for women, we are dedicated to providing a superior education enhanced by an emphasis on building leadership skills and fostering a spirit to serve others. Our measure of success is graduates who are committed to using their knowledge and skills to better themselves, their environments and the world.

*Mount St. Mary's College is a diverse community committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination on the basis of any characteristic protected by federal, state or local law, ordinance or regulation.*

# THE MOUNT

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EDITOR  
Pia Abelgas Orense

EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
Debbie Ream

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Phillip Jordan

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS  
Jeanne (Redell) Ruiz '63, Elizabeth  
(Robles) Jimenez '03

CLASS NOTES EDITOR  
Barbara (Dummel) Brunner '63

DESIGN  
San Luis Design

PHOTOGRAPHY  
Glenn Marzano, Watchara Phomicinda,  
Carrie Rosema, MSMC Archives

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The Mount, 10 Chester Place, Los Angeles,  
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To contact the editor or submit a  
story idea, write to Pia Abelgas  
Orense, assistant director of public  
relations, Mount St. Mary's College, 10  
Chester Place, Los Angeles, CA 90007;  
e-mail [porense@msmc.la.edu](mailto:porense@msmc.la.edu); or call  
213.477.2504. Class Notes news should be  
mailed to Alumnae Relations  
at the same address or emailed to  
[erobles@msmc.la.edu](mailto:erobles@msmc.la.edu).

For Information  
Alumnae Relations 213.477.2767  
Business Office 310.954.4040  
Chalon Campus 310.954.4000  
Doheny Campus 213.477.2500  
Financial Aid 310.954.4190  
Graduate Admission 213.477.2800  
Institutional Advancement 213.477.2764  
Undergraduate Admission 310.954.4250  
Weekend College 213.477.2866



### **Maria Contreras-Sweet to headline 2013 commencement**

Maria Contreras-Sweet, one of the first Latinas in the country to found a publicly traded company, will be the commencement speaker at this year's ceremony on May 6. Contreras-Sweet is the executive chair and founder of ProAmérica Bank in Los Angeles. As California's Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing Agency under Gov. Gray Davis, she was the first Latina to hold a state cabinet position.

Commencement will be held at the Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal Citywalk.



### **Paralympic medalist and author Bonnie St. John inspires Mount students at Women's Leadership Conference**

More than 260 people attended the Mount's "Create, Connect, and Commit to Change: A Leadership Experience for Women" on Sept. 8 on the Chalon Campus. Mount St. Mary's, through the Women's Leadership Program, has been hosting the conference for nearly 30 years, but 2012 was the first year the event was open to the public. Bonnie St. John, the first African-American to win Paralympic medals in ski racing, delivered the keynote speech. The event offered workshops on social entrepreneurship, visionary leadership and skills building.

### **Portmont College at Mount St. Mary's offers alternative model for higher education**

Mount St. Mary's College and the Denver-based MyCollege Foundation have launched Portmont College at Mount St. Mary's, a dynamic, affordable model for higher education. Portmont College at Mount St. Mary's will provide high quality, transfer-level associate degrees to students who have the desire but lack the means to pursue a more traditional college path. Courses combine the best of personalized online education with in-person student cohorts, support services and social learning opportunities.

The MyCollege Foundation concept was developed at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with the goal of helping low-income youth in America gain excellent college credentials more affordably. The Gates Foundation is also providing early grant support for the program.

Portmont College at Mount St. Mary's will offer four associate degree programs: business administration, computer science, liberal arts and pre-health science. For more information, visit [portmont.la.edu](http://portmont.la.edu).

## from the faculty

**Nancy Ballesteros**, lecturer in language & culture, and **Montserrat Reguant**, professor and chair of the language & culture department, presented "Does it Sound Native? Assessing Students' Performance Within Traditional and Online Environments" at the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese's annual conference in Puerto Rico in July 2012. Reguant also presented "Our Challenges and Opportunities Expressed by University Heritage Students."

**Katherine Brueck**, chair of the English department, presented "Carl Jung and Iris Murdoch: Myth and the Spirit in Iris Murdoch's *The Green Knight*" at an international conference at Kingston University in London in September 2012.

**Julia Chang**, professor of physical therapy, published an article, "Synaptoneurosome Micromethod for Fractionation of Mouse and Human Brain, and Primary Neuronal Cultures," in the *Journal of Neuroscience Methods* in September 2012.

**Jane Crawford**, instructor of humanities, led the panel on "French Literature Before 1800" at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association's annual convention held in Boulder, Colo., in October 2012.

## Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey headlines Ready to Run™ campaign training for women

More than 100 women, including Mount students and alums, attended Ready to Run™ Feb. 8-9, a nonpartisan, campaign-training program designed to train and encourage women to run for public office. The two-day training at MSMC featured a keynote presentation from Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey.

Lacey's successful 2012 campaign to head the nation's largest prosecutorial agency marked her first run for elective office. When she won, Lacey became the first woman and the first African-American elected to the D.A. post. At Mount St. Mary's, she shared the most important campaign-trail lesson she learned: "Sometimes what seems like the impossible is merely difficult."

Ready to Run™ speakers included Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, the first African-American woman from California elected to Congress; Celinda Lake, prominent political strategist and pollster; Nancy Bocskor, fundraising and campaign communications expert; and MSMC trustee Val Zavala, host of "SoCal Connected" and vice president of KCET.



## Conference discusses technology, social justice in curricula

Educators, community activists and young people gathered March 16 at Mount St. Mary's Doheny Campus for an interactive conference on "Teaching, Technology and Social Justice."

Keynote speaker Steve Goodman, founding director of New York's Educational Video Center, spoke about teaching documentary video skills to young people. More than a dozen workshops enabled teachers and other attendees to compare social justice curricula and investigate the impact of digital technology in teaching.

For more information on this Critical Teaching in Action conference, visit [www.msmc.la.edu/criticalteaching](http://www.msmc.la.edu/criticalteaching).



## Political science student joins group of powerful women at U.S. State Department event in New York



First the female prime minister of Thailand spoke. Then the president of Kosovo delivered her keynote address. By the time it was Claudia Garcia's '14 turn to speak to the group of powerful women in New York last September, she was feeling a bit intimidated. But public speaking comes easily to Garcia, a mock trial and moot court veteran

in MSMC's political science department. She eloquently told the all-female gathering of U.S. State Department officials and global leaders that access to clean water is a basic human right for women in undeveloped countries.

Garcia, a pre-law minor, was invited to join the conversation at Barnard College on Sept. 24 for "A Global Conversation: Women Leaders Respond to the United National General Assembly." The event was presented by the Women in Public Service Project in partnership with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The day was held in conjunction with the United Nations' 67th regular session of the General Assembly. Garcia was one of eight students from women's colleges across the country who joined the discussion, which highlighted post-conflict and transitional justice.

## from the faculty

**Michele Dumont**, professor of philosophy, and **Shelly Tochluk**, chair of the education department, have teamed up for the past four years with AWARE-LA (Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere-Los Angeles) to produce and facilitate an annual summer institute. The 2012 event was held on the Doheny Campus.

**Robin Gordon**, professor of education and director of the secondary education program, will have her book, "Searching for the Soror Mystica: The Lives and Science of Women Alchemists," published in April with University Press of America. Also, a book she co-authored, "Philosophy of Education in Historical Perspective," was published in Korean in September 2012.

**Paul Green**, associate professor of philosophy, was program co-chair of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers' annual international conference held at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, in July 2012. Green presented "When and How To Lecture." **Wanda Teays**, chair of the philosophy department, also attended and presented "Teach Ethics Through Movies," based on her most recent book.

## College co-hosts Women in Public Service Institute

In March, the Mount co-hosted with Scripps College the Women in Public Service Project's inaugural Institute for Women's Leadership in Latin America. Thirty female civic and community leaders from 16 countries came together for a series of workshops and policy forums held at the Scripps and Mount campuses from March 12-21. The week's keynote speaker was Josefina Vázquez Mota, Mexico's first female presidential candidate to run under a major political party and the country's former secretary of public education.



The Women in Public Service Project (WPSP) was launched by former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2011. Now part of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, WPSP aims to advance women's participation in public service globally.

The last day of the Institute coincided with the release of Mount St. Mary's College's second Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™.



Photos from the event will be online after March 21 at [www.msmc.la.edu](http://www.msmc.la.edu).

## from the faculty

**Pam Haldeman**, director of the film, media & social justice program, is producing a short film for "Life Moments for Women" authors Maureen Ford and Patty DeDominic. The authors are raising money for the Women's Foundation of California through book sales. The film will involve program instructors **Charles Bunce** and **Kelby Thwaites**.

**Joan Johnson**, instructor in English and creative writing, had two short stories, "Flight" and "The Glass Bead," published in the October 2012 edition of *Confluence*, a journal of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs.

**Millie Kidd**, director of the master in humanities program, presented "Making the Transition to Graduate School" at the Association for Graduate Liberal Studies Programs' annual conference in Portland, Ore., in October 2012.

**Alan Lee**, associate professor of physical therapy, moderates a national podcast series for the American Physical Therapy Association. The podcasts are available at [www.apta.org/podcasts](http://www.apta.org/podcasts).

**Trevor Merrill**, adjunct faculty of language & culture, co-authored a book, "Psychopolitics: Conversations with Trevor Cribben Merrill (Studies in Violence, Mimesis and Culture)," which was published in October 2012.



### College welcomes largest freshman class

Mount St. Mary's greeted a record-size freshman class on its two campuses last August, with 543 freshmen enrolling for the 2012-13 school year. The College's total enrollment for all of its associate, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs tops 3,100.

Undergraduate admissions officials believe there are several reasons for continued growth. They cite financial difficulties at California public universities, relatively low tuition costs at MSMC compared to other state private schools, strategic growth of the College's prospective student inquiry pool, and expedited admission decisions as a result of internal processing changes.

The most popular undergraduate majors for incoming traditional baccalaureate students are pre-nursing, biology, psychology and business. For incoming associate students, popular majors are pre-health nursing, pre-health biology, psychology and sociology.





## New undergrad fields of study offered at Mount

Two new majors and three new minors are providing innovative opportunities for Mount students. Majors in global politics, and journalism & new media and minors in music scoring, creative advertising and geographic information systems (GIS) all debuted this academic year.

Mount St. Mary's already offers an international relations minor, but global politics is a first on the major level. Students will be required to complete a study-abroad program, a volunteer-abroad program or a local internship that has a global perspective. Upper-division requirements include courses in "Humanitarian Intervention," "Refugees and International Migration," and "International Relations Theory." A global women's studies concentration is also available.

### WHAT'S NEW

#### Majors

- Global Politics
- Journalism & New Media

#### Minors

- Music Scoring
- Creative Advertising
- Geographic Information Systems

In addition to the traditional focus on writing, critical thinking and ethics, journalism & new media students will learn cutting-edge technology and ever-evolving mediums of communication. The program includes courses such as "In-Depth Social Issue Reporting," "Pro Tools Essentials," and "e-Media."

The music scoring minor is the result of a cooperative effort between the College's Film, Media & Social Justice program and its music department. The minor teaches students how to compose, record and edit music for film, television, video games and the Internet. The creative advertising minor is a partnership between film, media and social justice faculty and the business and art departments. Participating students will be able to explore the inventive elements of advertising as well as the principles behind the business and psychology of professional advertising campaigns.

A primary appeal of the College's geographic information systems minor is how well it complements other disciplines. Mount faculty designed the program to apply to a variety of fields, including the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas. GIS courses include "Intro to Spatial Thinking," "Fundamentals of GIS" and "Spatial Analysis."

## Holiday event marks Doheny Campus' 50th anniversary



This year's Doheny Mansion Holiday Open House was a celebration of the Doheny Campus' 50th anniversary. In addition to the holiday festivities, author Don Sloper gave short presentations on the history of the Mansion and Chester Place. Alums from the inaugural Associate of Arts Classes of 1964 and 1965 were also honored at the event.

## from the faculty

**Linda Moody**, graduate dean, has been elected to a three-year term as treasurer of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). She will serve on the executive committee of the AAR board of directors and chair the finance committee.

**Lia Roberts**, associate professor of history and political science, published an article, "Explaining the Electoral Success of Neoliberal Reformers in Latin America: 1980-2000" in the September 2012 issue of *The Latin Americanist*.

**Devery Rodgers**, Fritz B. Burns Chair of Education and director of instructional leadership and clear credential programs, was chosen as a member of the Phi Kappa Delta 2012-2013 Class of Emerging Leaders. She and the other honorees were feted in Washington, D.C., in November 2012.

**Marsha Sato**, director of the graduate nursing program, was quoted in an article, "The Master Class: From RN to MSN," in the annual nursing education issue of *Working Nurse*, published in August 2012.

**Ana Thorne**, lecturer in the master in humanities program, presented "Framing a Blaxicana Identity in an All Black Midwestern Town, 1955-1960" at the Association for the Study of African American Life and History's annual conference in Pittsburgh in September 2012.

## from the faculty

**Marcos Villatoro**, professor of English and the Fletcher Jones Endowed Chair of Writing, screened his new documentary "Tamale Road: A Memoir from El Salvador" in September 2012 at the Broadway International Film Festival in Los Angeles. The film explores Villatoro's maternal hometown in El Salvador and also examines the dark side of the country's history — the fear and the massacres.

**Diane Vines**, director of the traditional bachelor's in nursing program, presented two sessions on screening for, and assessment of, post-traumatic stress disorder to the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon conference in Portland, Ore., in October 2012.

**Katherine Whitman**, associate professor of business administration, presented a paper, "Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship," at a forum in Ganzhou City, China, in August 2012. Other presenters included the mayor of Ganzhou City and professors from Northwest University in Xian and Tsinghua University in Beijing. Mount MBA students were invited guests.



For more faculty accomplishments, go to [www.msmc.la.edu/academics/provost](http://www.msmc.la.edu/academics/provost)



### Film inspires new grad to make 500-mile pilgrimage

**P**aulina Robles '12 was mid-way through her 500-mile pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago in Spain, her shins swollen and back sore from carrying a 17-pound backpack, and all she could think about was the natural beauty around her. Europe's well-worn path, known in English as The Way of St. James, was Robles' haven for 37 days last summer.

She started her long walk last May in St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, France. But it was a year earlier when Robles was inspired to take the trip in the first place. Her parents had heard about the movie "The Way" by filmmakers Emilio Estevez and Martin Sheen, which takes place along the rocky, picturesque route. The family went to a local theater to experience the spiritual movie, and soon after Robles mapped out an itinerary for her own journey. [Sheen and Estevez presented a private screening of the film on the Chalon Campus in November 2011 for members of Catholics in Media Associates.]

The sociology major, whose Mount courses focused on human rights and global studies, says her time on Camino de Santiago brought her peace about the future. "It made me want to travel more and see the world, to go to a country and walk around it," she says.

### Community participates in strategic planning process

A group of about 70 representatives of the Mount community — faculty, staff, students, alums and friends — gathered for a two-day Strategic Planning conference in September. The objective of the two-day session was to create a platform upon which the College's 2013-2017 Strategic Plan will be developed. Guided by the vision of creating a culture of innovation for excellence, the participants focused on the five pillars of women, innovative teaching and learning, global awareness and understanding, community, and the spirit of the founders. Since then, President Ann McElaney-Johnson has held several workshops with students, faculty and staff to get input and ideas that will help define the Strategic Plan.

## Students named best oral advocates in competition

Some of the best courtroom speakers in the West come from Mount St. Mary's College, so say the judges in the Western Regionals of the American Collegiate Moot Court Association in December.

Giovanna Victorino '13 and Claudia Garcia '14 each took home "best oral advocate" awards as two of the competition's best speakers. Victorino also landed a spot in the overall top 10, finishing No. 8 in the 68-person field that included two-person teams from 10 colleges and universities such as Brigham Young University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and California State University, Long Beach. Garcia earned a spot in the top 20, at No. 16 overall.

## Foundation awards Best and Brightest scholarships

A trio of Mount St. Mary's students have earned "Best & Brightest" scholarships from the Millennium Momentum Foundation for the 2012-2013 school year. Alba Arana '14, Guadalupe Borjon '13 and Karla Guzman '13 each received scholarships for their academic achievements and aspirations to pursue careers in public service.



The Foundation's Best & Brightest Scholarship Program, one of the most competitive in Southern California, seeks students that possess a combination of exceptional academic merit, strong leadership potential, commitment to reinvest in their local communities and financial need.

## College awarded Robert Wood Johnson Nursing Scholarships for fifth straight year

Mount St. Mary's College announced that for the fifth year in a row, it has been selected as a grant recipient of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Scholarship program (NCIN), which provides scholarship support to students. To date, 45 Mount nursing students have been assisted by the grant funds. The new award will help an additional six students, bringing the Mount's total scholarship aid from the program to \$510,000.

The Mount will receive the new funds during the 2012-13 academic year to support students in the school's Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

## MSMC leads move to foster student civic engagement

Mount St. Mary's College was selected in September as one of 25 institutions to lead the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Network for NASPA — Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. MSMC will find innovative ways to partner with others on and off campus to influence students' ongoing commitment to civic learning.

## Mount President Emerita appointed to state commission on student aid

Gov. Jerry Brown appointed Jacqueline Powers Doud, president emerita of Mount St. Mary's College, as the representative of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC).

CSAC's mission is to make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians.

## MSMC partners with John Tracy Clinic to teach children with hearing loss

The College has signed an agreement with the John Tracy Clinic, an internationally recognized diagnostic and education center for young children with hearing loss, to offer a new graduate program that will prepare students to work with deaf and hard-of-hearing youth and their parents.

The program, expected to begin this summer, culminates with a master's degree in education and a preliminary teaching credential as an education specialist.

The degree involves an optional distance-learning format with some online coursework, but includes a one-month rotation at the clinic.

All instruction and rotations will take place at the John Tracy Clinic, located on West Adams Boulevard across from the College's Doheny Campus.



# A P P L I E D S C I E N C E

**FROM HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS TO  
MAPPING ENGINEERS, MOUNT ALUMS  
HELP INSPIRE A NEW GENERATION  
TO PURSUE CAREERS IN SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH**

BY JOANNA BANKS

**M**iddle school science teacher Cristina Solis '98 stood on a chunk of sea ice surrounded by research scientists who were coaxing her to jump into the freezing water. She took the dare, and survived her polar plunge. The feat, during her trip to the Arctic last summer as part of an elite group of teachers, was unexpected yet exhilarating, much like her journey from Mount St. Mary's to her life as an educator.

"I jumped in and it was so cold it knocked the wind out of me," recalls Solis, who teaches at Los Angeles Academy Middle School. "I felt like I wasn't breathing anymore. It's crazy but when people come to the Arctic Circle, they do stuff like that."

During her five-week stay near Barrow, Alaska, as part of the Polar TREC program (Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating), Solis was paired with researchers from Cornell University and San Diego State University to study microbial activity in thawing Arctic permafrost. The research is important to better understand how chemicals move through Earth to impact climate change.



Cristina Solis '98 during her expedition to the northern arctic coast of Alaska last summer.



E

While California women are earning more degrees, with the exception of the biological sciences, fewer women than men are majoring in science, technology, engineering and math — degrees that can lead to higher-paying jobs.

*Source: 2013 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™*



Photo: Carrie Rosema

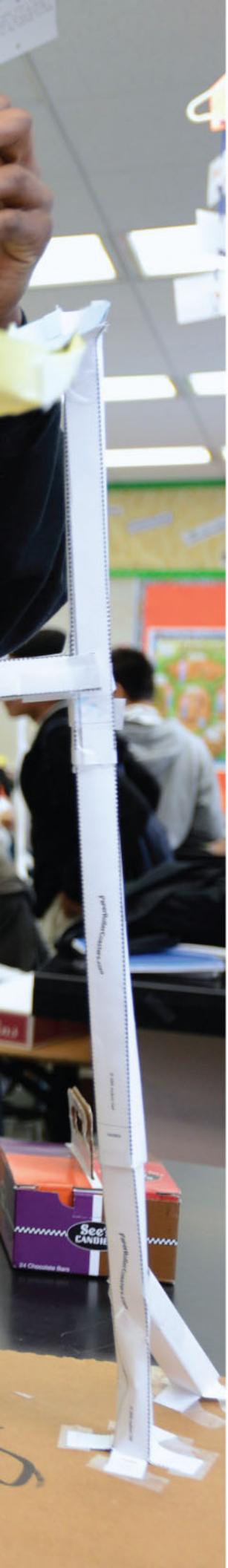


In California schools, both genders continue to improve in math and science performance in their early years, with girls on par or above boys in math but falling behind in science.

*Source: 2013 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™*







Solis represents the many MSMC alums who excel in their areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, known as STEM fields. They are teachers, scientists and engineers whose passion for solving equations and understanding life in its most microscopic form inspires those around them. The College's inaugural Report on the Status of Women & Girls in California™, released in 2012, revealed that although women are graduating from college at higher rates than men, far fewer women than men are pursuing degrees in STEM fields such as biotechnology, engineering, and computer and information science. Solis is inspiring a new generation of girls and boys, using enthusiasm, encouragement and her passion for teaching to make science fun and relevant.

On a December day before winter break, Solis' students are putting finishing touches on paper rollercoasters they are building for a lesson on engineering and velocity. Students work in groups to design coasters with paper "tracks" that can hold a marble for at least five seconds. Solis pops into the groups, smiles and jokes with students while offering tips on how to make their projects stronger.

"Ms. Solis helps us a lot," says Kristen Williams, 13. "I like all the projects and experiments that we do in this class."

In a corner of the room, 13-year-old Sergio Maradiaga works quietly on an elaborate curve for his rollercoaster. "I want to be a chemical engineer and go to MIT," he says.

Hands-on projects are hallmarks of Solis' strategy to connect science to real-life experiences for students. Most teenagers can relate to the thrill of a quick drop or an upside-down loop on their favorite rollercoaster. Her curriculum also includes field trips to local museums and science centers to study 21st-century issues, such as alternative fuel sources and climate change. Once a year, Solis and other science teachers choose a handful of top female students to travel to Caltech for a girls' engineering day. The trip includes tours of labs,

competitions and opportunities to meet girls from other middle schools who share an aptitude for science.

Natural curiosity and an openness to new possibilities led Solis into teaching. After graduating from the Mount with a double major in business administration and English, she began her professional life working on business accounts for a large advertising firm in Santa Monica. Her off-hours volunteer work with children in Los Angeles grew her desire to teach. She sought out a highly competitive master's in education program at Columbia University in New York and began teaching six years ago.

Moving from the business world to the teacher's lounge hasn't been easy.

There is little downtime between classes for socializing with other instructors. During a recent half-hour lunch break, Solis quickly grabbed a pre-packed sandwich and a diet Coke.

"Before school I'm prepping and after school I'm participating on the learning teams and in meetings," Solis says. "It feels like a 24-7 job in a positive way."

Solis stays current on science trends by working with groups such as the Aquarium of the Pacific, Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence and the World Forestry Institute. In 2009, the organization Earthwatch chose Solis to help research coastal ecology along the coral reef habitats of the Bahamas. "That experience really helped me connect global climate change to my students' chemistry unit," she says.

For a few days last December, Solis was in San Francisco with her Cornell University research partner from the Polar TREC trip to present their findings at a geophysics conference. "There are so many opportunities that teachers can share with their students," says Solis.

"What's really exciting for students is when they see their teachers doing things that aren't just teaching," says Solis, ever vigilant for her next chance to dive into the vast, deep unknown. "They see teachers are not one-dimensional."



Read about the research Mount students and biology professor Luiza Nogaj are conducting on disease-causing proteins. [www.msmc.la.edu/magazine](http://www.msmc.la.edu/magazine)

## IT'S ALL ABOUT HAVING THE RIGHT CHEMISTRY

Cynthia (Dias) Selassie '74, a veteran professor of chemistry at Pomona College and the institution's past associate dean, started her research career as an undergraduate at MSMC. Mount faculty nurtured her interest in lab work, and helped shepherd her onto research teams at universities nationwide.

Selassie's passion for applied chemistry has established her as a recognized expert with published findings on the Quantitative Structure Activity Relationship (QSAR) paradigm and its applicability to the toxicity of various chemicals. In graduate school at Duke University, Selassie often was the only woman in the room. But now, women and men are about equally represented in the classes she teaches.

Keeping science grounded in real experience such as drug chemistry and health seems to draw women in, she says. "Women actually gravitate to things that are more humanistic that they can relate to, things that are more practical." However, sparking women's interest in chemistry begins much earlier than the college classroom. "High schools play a critical role in encouraging women and underrepresented students to pursue studies in the sciences," she says.

## BUSINESS TEAM A CRITICAL LINK BETWEEN LAB AND MARS

Without Anna Intharathut Stern '99 and her business team at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, robotics engineers at the prestigious research center would be missing a critical link to exploring Mars. They would be without an important ally in discovering how to use robots in drilling and mining on Earth, and in developing new technology for naval vessels.

As a business administration manager in JPL's Mobility and Robotics Systems Section, Stern tracks intricate details of new designs coming in daily from 90 robotics engineers and some 40 more contract employees at the NASA research lab. "I need to know everything about anything the engineers are doing," says Stern, who holds her bachelor's degree in international business and political science from MSMC and an MBA in management of global information technology from American University.

She takes the lead in operations historically handled by men. The Mount reinforced the sense of women empowerment, she says, and "that helped me become a strong female in a male-dominated environment."





## T E C H N O L O G Y

### MAKING SENSE OF THE WORLD BY MAPPING EARTH

After Hurricane Sandy ravaged the East Coast in 2012, Nina Cole '02 used the latest technology at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory to map destruction using powerful imaging equipment aboard a satellite flying over Earth. Images produced by her team were used to help pinpoint the areas most in need as federal officials began the long process of responding to the emergency.

Cole is responsible for acquiring the data necessary for the creation of detailed maps of Earth as a mission operations engineer at NASA's Pasadena-based research and development facility managed by the California Institute of Technology. "Our satellite gives us access to places on this planet that may not be accessible to humans," says Cole, who earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics with an emphasis in computer science.

After MSMC, Cole earned a master's degree in geography, focusing on geographic information systems. She has worked at JPL since she was a student intern. "You can get high-resolution information on a global scale," she says. "We're making a contribution and our information is really valuable."





## ENGINEERING HER OWN PATH IN MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY

Whether designing bridges, roads or schools, the nation's top engineering and architecture firms turn to Karen McKnight-Compton '88 and her business A3K Consulting LLC for help developing business plans that will guide their projects to completion.

McKnight-Compton, a College regent with a bachelor's degree in chemistry, has spent 25 years learning every aspect of the construction and engineering industries. She started her career with the former Hughes Aircraft Co., and then worked in environmental cleanup, construction management, water resource management and the fields of building engineering and architecture — industries typically populated by men.

"I work with some really great engineers and architects who are women. The biggest struggle we face, unlike men, is that we are caring for aging parents and growing children, and our careers change course. Engineering is still a very male-dominated field," she says.

"You can't let anyone determine for you that you shouldn't pursue it because you don't see more women in it. You have to pursue it because it's your love and your passion."

**E N G I N E E R I N G**



## CONFIDENCE IN NUMBERS BUILDS OVER TIME

## MATH

As an undergrad, Avygail Sanchez '01 used to hate math. "I would hyperventilate any time I had to take an exam," she recalls. But now her days are all about numbers and equations.

Sanchez is part of the team rebuilding the iconic Sixth Street Bridge in Los Angeles. While her job as a senior planner at HNTB Corporation mostly deals with community outreach, a substantial part of her work involves reviewing engineering and architectural plans, preparing cost sheets and projections, and calculating the project's effect on air quality and noise pollution.

After finishing her bachelor's in psychology at the Mount, she earned a master's degree in urban planning at UCLA. Prior to HNTB, she worked as a transportation client development manager at the Los Angeles engineering firm HDR.

"I'd like to see more women in the STEM fields," she says. "It's not just a necessity for the world to have this diversity, it's also critical financially as a career choice for women."

## ENCOURAGEMENT EQUALS SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

It's a comforting reality for math whiz Monica Daranyi '81: For every problem, there's a solution. "I have always liked math because it's such an organized subject and that's what I like," says the mathematics major and computer science minor. "It's so black and white."

Daranyi says she spent weekends in her Chalon Campus dorm room, agonizing over challenging equations that took her days to solve. A College dean helped her get her first job as a teacher at Louisville High School in Woodland Hills, Calif. After two years at that school, she taught at Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles for 10 years, and then helped start a math department at what was then the new Milken Community High School opening on the west side of Los Angeles.

Daranyi's equation for keeping her teenage students engaged in math: Encouragement equals success. "I watch out for every kid," she says. "Some of my students come in to my classes saying, 'Just so you know, I'm really bad at math.' I'm kind of a competitive person and I work that much harder to help every person." ♣



# Bravo, Dean Rodin!

By Joan Johnson

Merrill Rodin has been a champion of adult learners at Mount St. Mary's for over 20 years. As founding director of the Weekend College program, he has seen students gain confidence and fulfillment as they develop their talents and he's watched the program grow exponentially since its inception.

Because of his gentle nature and refusal to brag, many are unaware that Rodin is himself a man of many talents. He was a very successful child star in the Golden Age of movies, the "Fabulous Forties." Perhaps it was this early life, along with all those who have helped him succeed, that led him to support the dreams of each generation of Weekend College students.

Merrill's parents came to America as children: his father from Russia, his mother from what was once the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They were part of huge families with eight and nine siblings respectively. Merrill's father had little formal education but was talented and found a place in American vaudeville where he met his future wife.

After marriage, Merrill's father went into the insurance business to gain enough financial stability to allow his wife to stay home and raise their three children. Merrill was the oldest. His parents reinforced talent when they saw it and Merrill was soon taking lessons: singing, tap and piano (at which he excelled). The family moved from St. Louis, Missouri, to Arizona. In hopes of easing Merrill's asthma, they eventually moved to Los Angeles where they connected with his uncle, Gil Rodin, in Hollywood.

Gil Rodin was a jazz saxophone player with the big bands, Bob Crosby and the Bobcats, among others, and became a producer of big TV specials (Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby) and of the soundtracks for films ("The Sting" and "American Graffiti"). Uncle Gil saw the potential in his young nephew and it wasn't long before Merrill was the only kid studying with the "big" stars under Max Reinhardt, the master of theater direction at his famous school on the corner of Fairfax Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles.

At 10 years old, Merrill was being directed by the great Reinhardt, and that was only the beginning of working with famous directors while still a boy. Once in the movies, where he had school on the set, young Merrill worked with some of the biggest Hollywood stars: Jennifer Jones ("Song of Bernadette"), Anne Baxter ("Pied Piper"), June Haver, Preston Foster and Frances Gifford ("American Empire"), Frank Sinatra, Linda Darnell, among others. He appeared in 17 films in about five years. At the same time, he was giving

## THE MERRILL RODIN WEEKEND COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

is being established in honor of the dean of MSMC's Weekend College program. To give to this scholarship, please contact Alison Raitt, development officer, at 213.477.2543.



Merrill Rodin, far right, appeared in the 1942 movie "The Pied Piper," starring Monty Woolley and Roddy McDowell.

piano recitals, acting onstage and studying for his future.

In high school, he became friends with Susan Sontag, a fellow student at North Hollywood High School, who eventually became a literary icon. In an article in *The New Yorker* magazine (December 1987), Sontag admitted she was in love with Merrill when they were young. She described Merrill as "calm, charming and not stupid at all."

And how did Merrill come to be the dean of Weekend College? "I was teaching the history of philosophy at St. Mary's College in Moraga, Calif., and I read in the *Chronicle for Higher Education* that Mount St. Mary's was looking for a director for a new weekend college program. I came down from the Bay Area to interview in the spring of 1992 and began (at the Mount) in the fall semester," Merrill says.

"We took two months to open the program with 50 students, 15 classes, two majors and a dozen faculty. Today we have three dozen faculty, 40 classes, around 330 students, and will have 11 majors this coming semester," he says.

It is true that "all the world's a stage," but Dean Rodin is not *merely* a player. He is a man touched by stars, loaded with talent and a love for encouraging others at each point in their progress towards their goals — in the students' case, a college degree. All of this he gained no doubt from his perceptive and dedicated parents who recognized potential when he was young, and supported his talents with everything they had. He is firmly following in that tradition. ♣

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Joan Johnson is a professional writer and an English instructor at Mount St. Mary's College.





Photo: Carrie Rosema

## New scholarship remembers passion and inspiration of beloved Sister



When Arlene (Russie) Rees '51 first saw Mount St. Mary's Chalon campus, she thought it was the most beautiful place she had ever seen. It was a dream come true for the classical and operatic music enthusiast to attend the Mount on a music scholarship and spend her weekends volunteering as an usher at L.A.'s historic Philharmonic Auditorium.

Still, Rees' school years weren't easy. She grew up in Seal Beach, a small community 40 miles south. During college, however, Rees' parents moved to Alaska for work. "I had no family or transportation, and I had some health issues," she remembers. "Sister Timothy probably saved my life."

Sister Timothy Spellacy, CSJ, taught music at the College for more than 30 years. "She became a second mom to me," Rees says. "She brought me to the doctor, checked on my studies, and took me shopping when I needed a nice outfit for a performance."

Sister Timothy, a violinist and pianist, also encouraged Rees to take a creative writing course, sparking a new passion. In 1951, Rees graduated cum laude with majors in music and English — and then spent 40-plus years in education.

"I don't know what Sister Timothy saw in me, but she was right!" Rees says. "I loved teaching."

Rees, now retired in Seal Beach with her husband Ralph, recently funded a new Mount scholarship for female music majors — a scholarship she named after Sister Timothy Spellacy.

"I've given to the Mount since I started working and I consider this a jump on giving through our wills," Rees says. "But this is special."



## Sister Timothy Spellacy Scholarship

The Rees' gift endowed the Sister Timothy Spellacy Scholarship at \$30,000, with the first scholarship expected to be awarded in 2014.

In 1929, before her 30-year Mount teaching career began, Sister Timothy was part of the College's inaugural graduating class. In 1932, Sister Timothy broke more new ground when she received the first master's degree ever awarded by Mount St. Mary's, a master's in music.

Sister Timothy pursued further music studies under the famous French composer, conductor and teacher Nadia Boulanger. She also received a doctorate from the University of Montreal before returning to the Mount in 1959 as chair of the College's Music department. Sister Timothy passed away from cancer in 1963.



## Making a grand entrance

The College's latest proposed project will create a new, formal entrance to the Chalon Campus, including a welcoming walkway from the parking structure to the campus center.



### DONOR WALL

Visitors to the College will be greeted by a wall filled with the names of the Mount's generous supporters.

*Be a part of the Donor Wall. Contact Maria Solano, director of annual giving, at [msolano@msmc.la.edu](mailto:msolano@msmc.la.edu) or 213.477.2536*

### PLAZA and WALKWAY

A landing plaza will enhance the pedestrian experience between the parking structure and the campus center.

### CAMPUS CENTER

The project will transform the campus center into a contemporary, multipurpose learning and conference space.

### SWEEPING VIEWS

The project's design takes advantage of scenic vistas on campus, with sweeping views of Greater Los Angeles.

## *with thanks for these recent gifts*

**Kaiser Permanente** – Provided \$150,000 to augment the MSMC-Kaiser Permanente Scholarship and Loan Forgiveness Program. In the past eight years, this invaluable partnership with Kaiser Permanente has helped to support over 100 nursing students.

**Bill Hannon Foundation** – Provided \$100,000 to the Student Success Program. Funds help to partially support the two-year pilot phase of a five-year project to improve the impact of college services and promote student

success by increasing retention and reducing the time to degree.

**Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation** – Gave gifts totaling \$225,000. In addition to its annual contributions toward student scholarships and maintenance of the Doheny Campus, the Doheny Foundation has awarded a new grant of \$50,000 for the MSMC nursing simulation lab project on the Doheny Campus.



## welcome

We have quite a few events lined up for our alums this year. If you live in Washington, Oregon and Kansas, we hope you can join us at one of the alum gatherings we're organizing near you. For those who live in the Los Angeles area, we're hosting a walking tour of the beautiful Union Station in April. Join us on our annual Alum Trip; this year we will be visiting the historic landmarks of China. Most importantly, mark Nov. 2 in your calendar for Homecoming. We look forward to seeing you at these special events. More information is available on Page 28, or you may contact alumnae relations at 213.477.2767.

## class notes

'51

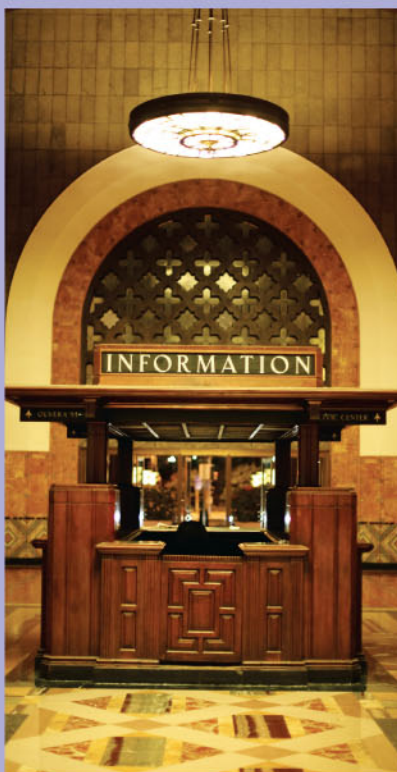
**Susan (Robertson) Gerard** and her husband, George, have retired to Anacortes, Wash. They celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with a visit to Seattle in June 2012.

'52

**Grace (Bohanon) Noyes** recently retired from playing tennis and keeps busy helping her husband, Pete, promote his latest book, "The Real L.A. Confidential." Their son, Jack, is a senior assignment editor at NBC4 News in Burbank, Calif., and has two daughters who are the loves of their lives.

'59

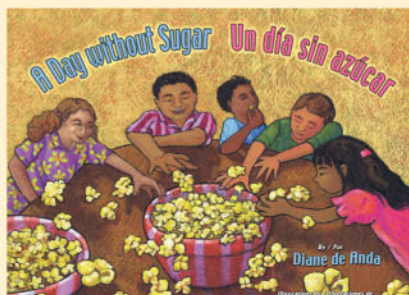
**Rosalie (Meggiolario) O'Grady** recently traveled to Turkey and Israel. She enjoys serving as a eucharistic minister at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Carlsbad, Calif., and volunteering at the Carlsbad Visitor Center.



### Take a tour of L.A.'s historic Union Station

Does the flavor of old Los Angeles speak to you? If so, please join the Alumnae Association for a walking tour of Union Station, the last great railway station built in America. Back in 1939, the grand opening of Union Station was celebrated with a three-day extravaganza attended by nearly half a million people. The station's monumental architecture, a unique combination of Spanish Colonial Revival and Art Deco styles, assured that it would be one of the most identifiable landmarks in the city. The tour, led by Los Angeles Conservancy docents, will be on April 13 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost is \$10. Reservations are required. RSVP to Jeanne (Redell) Ruiz '63 at 213.477.2512 or [jaruiz@msmc.la.edu](mailto:jaruiz@msmc.la.edu).

'65



↑ **Diane de Anda's** fifth children's book, "The Monster in the Mattress and Other Stories" (May 2011), was selected for the Tejas Star Book Award 2012 and received a second place honor at the International Latino Book Awards 2012. Her two bilingual picture books, "A Day Without Sugar" (May 2012) and "A Patchwork Garden" (May 2013), encourage healthy nutrition. Two of her short stories for adults were begun decades ago in Sister Laurentia Digges' creative writing class at the Mount.

'66

**Lynn Taylor** did a three-week tour of Turkey in November with a group of family and friends.

'69

**Harriet Fields** is on the advisory board of The Mama Project, a nonprofit organization that works to increase the literacy and professional skills of women in developing countries. She recently spent a month doing research in Rwanda. She plans to return and bring public health nursing educators to provide service learning and training experiences. While in Rwanda, she also met with the Rwanda Cinema Center and the Kwetu Film Institute to screen two films by her grandfather, comedy icon W.C. Fields. In 2011, she was appointed to the Alumni Council at Teachers College of Columbia University, where she earned her master's and doctoral degrees.

**'70**

**Maria (Gutierrez) Ott** retired as superintendent of the Rowland Unified School District in August 2012 to begin a new career at USC Rossier School of Education as an executive in residence. She will teach graduate level courses and work on special projects.

**'80**

**Kathleen (McAvoy) Jahraus** traveled for seven months last year in an RV from Southern California to the Canadian Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario and returned through New York, Vermont and New Hampshire to catch the fall colors. It was an amazing 13,000-mile journey. She saw icebergs in Newfoundland, enjoyed lobsters in Nova Scotia and awoke to whales "singing" early one morning on the Gaspé Peninsula.

**'74**

**Kristine (Klumph) Bounds** reports the happy occasion of the wedding of her daughter, Kara, in September 2012. The event was held at the Santa Barbara Zoo. Son Kenneth performed the ceremony, and oldest child Tamara was the matron of honor, while grandchildren Ethan and Stella were ring bearer and flower girl.

**'75**

**Frances Martin** reports that her "baby," Thomas, started college at UC Irvine and she is remembering her own college days at the Mount. Her son lives in the dorms, and while she was a day student, the patterns are the same and he is making her laugh! Her daughter, Mary, is in the Mount's accelerated nursing program and her husband is talking retirement.

**Herman Velarde** worked for 32 years with the Los Angeles Unified School District, teaching K-12 and serving as a guidance and attendance counselor. He also spent three years as a specialist overseeing 48 LAUSD math and reading teachers working in non-public school settings. Velarde's book, "Handbook for America," relays his approach to enhancing learning skills and community relations for all K-12 students. A native of Gallup, N.M., he received his master's in education and administration from the Mount.

**'76**

**Susan Odegaard-Turner** traveled to South Africa in April 2012 to speak at the Christiaan Bernard Memorial Hospital in Cape Town. During her trip she also visited Johannesburg and a game reserve at Hoedspruit.

**'79**

**Natalie (Harris) Martinez** has been working as a pediatric nurse practitioner for a medical group and goes on an annual medical mission trip to Oaxaca, Mexico, with Project Compassion.

**'82**

**Christine (Berrington) Amann** was promoted to assistant principal in 2012 at Porterville High School in Porterville, Calif. She previously served for 12 years as a reading specialist and English teacher at Granite Hills High School. This is her 30th year in education and she tries to never forget the role she plays in high school students' lives.

**'81**

**Robert Feller** released his third book of poetry, "A Cool River," in October 2012. Also, one of his paintings won first place in the Caronel Open Air Contest.

**'84**



↑ **Marissa (Fuller) Trevett** is an adviser at Palos Verdes High School in Palos Verdes, Calif., for a club that hosts a fashion show to raise money for charity. For the past several years, the charity has been Nutre Hogar in Santiago, Panama. Nutre Hogar is a center for recuperating malnourished children. Last summer she took eight students to Santiago for 15 days to experience a Third World country and to work with the children at Nutre Hogar.

**'85**

**Margaret (Correnti) Grinnell** published a children's book called "Isabella and Penelope" in November 2012. It is a picture book about a little girl who stops speaking when her father passes away. She regains her voice through a very unlikely person.

**'86**



◀ **Laura DiFusco** is director of rehabilitation at Hollywood Community Hospital of Van Nuys in Van Nuys, Calif. DiFusco, who received her bachelor's in psychology from the Mount, is conducting

research on the effects of Zumba exercise on schizophrenics. She also runs therapeutic groups for patients to



# alum community

develop their fine motor skills through painting wall murals. The artwork is often displayed at local community exhibits and events.

**'92**

**Consuelo Bonillas** was promoted to associate professor of health education at Kean University in Union, N.J., where she has been a faculty member since 2003. Her college textbook, "Sexual Health in a Diverse World," was published in January 2012 and is used in undergraduate human sexuality courses. In 2011, she received a three-year, \$450,000 federal grant to help Hispanic pregnant women reduce their risk of gestational diabetes. In 2011, she was awarded a five-year, \$875,000 state grant to help reduce the risk of teenage pregnancy in two cities in New Jersey.

**'97**

**Kristin (Vanderlip) Taylor** was named a 2012 Outstanding Elementary Visual Art Educator of the Year by the California Art Education Association.

**'98**

**Jane Nadeau** retired in June 2012 after working in aerospace for over 35 years. She spends some of her free time volunteering for Long Beach Meals on Wheels and Breast Cancer Angels. Her husband retired in November 2011 after 32 years in aerospace and they took their first overseas adventure to the Amalfi Coast with Mount alums in September. They also tour around Southern California.

**Angila Romious'** son, Korede Romious-Olora, celebrated his second birthday in September. She is a research analyst at the College of the Desert in Palm Desert, Calif.

**'04**



↑ **Sarah Moe** attended both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions as the former director of political affairs for the Property Casualty Insurers Association. She is now the federal affairs manager for Hallmark.

**'09**

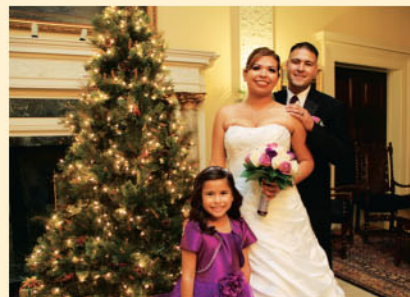
**Tess Ottenbreit** received her certified trust and financial advisor designation from the Institute of Certified Bankers in Washington, D.C., in June 2012.

**Alexandra Zuniga** lives in Los Angeles with her husband and their three daughters: Emily, Amanda and Olivia.

## marriages



- '00 ↑ **Annie Lin** to Jason Carr
- '02 **Natalia Mattan** to Choner Hung Long
- '04 **Meghan Kloosterman** to Andrew Michaeloff
- '04 **Perla Rodriguez** to Tony Magaña
- '04 **Stephanie Sanchez** to Alfred Perez



- '05 ↑ **Sara Fontan** to Cesar Ocampo
- '10 **Beverly Barnett** to Anthony Tarpley
- '11 **Margaret Kearney** to Robert J. Soranno



- '12 ↑ **Heather Strong** to Spencer Heublein

## births & adoptions

The Alumnae Association extends congratulations to the following alums and their spouses on their new additions

- '98 **Korede** to Angila Romious, 1st child
- '00 **Adrian Edward** to Maria (Briceno) Quintero, 1st child
- '00 **Hope Samantha** to Martha (Cervantes) Ramirez, 3rd child
- '00 **Peter Frank Rios IV** to Adrianna (Salazar) Rios, 1st child
- '01 **Jaxon Billy** to Margaux (De Leon) Kruger, 1st child
- '03 **Nyla Mackenzie Johnson** to Charisse Bradley, 1st child
- '03 **Benjamin Manuel** to Elizabeth (Robles) Jimenez, 1st child

- '03 Audrey Olivia to Janet Li-Tall, 2nd child
- '04 Finn Elliott to Alison Hutchins, 1st child
- '09 Jeremiah Ameir to Laura Washington, 1st child
- '10 Connor Leonard to Elizabeth (Aylward) Cameron, 2nd child

## in memoriam

Your prayers are requested for the repose of the souls of:

- '39 Frances Dutra Cutler, mother of Celine Cutler '84
- '43 Mary (Emerson) Limebrook, mother of Mary (Limebrook) Burnham '70
- '46 Virginia (Brown) Marovich
- '47 husband of Pat (Gisler) Galt and brother of Nancy (Galt) Haynoski '55
- '48 Maribeth (Harvey) Lillywhite
- '49 Marjorie (O'Hanlon) Quirke, sister of Kathleen (O'Hanlon) Truxaw '46
- '51 brother of Angela (McDonald) Kay and grandfather of Jennifer (McCreight) Villalba '03
- '53 husband of Sheila (Sullivan) Banken and father of Nancy Banken '87
- '53 Peggy Parkinson
- '55 Marylu Mattson
- '56 husband of Alison (MacDonald) Riggs
- '56 Mary Carol Scherb, sister of Judy (Scherb) Skraba '60

- '57 Katherine (Bondan) Gross, sister of Anne (Bondan) Ingebrigtsen '55 and Jo (Bondan) Roche '58
- '58 husband of Mary Ann Whitney
- '59 Gail (Esler) Bucklein
- '60 husband of Judy (Scherb) Skraba
- '61 Georgina (Foerst) Smith
- '61 Catherine (Ernster) O'Brien
- '65 father of Lawreen (Crain) Gallagher
- '65 husband of Maria (Venegas) Manciaci
- '68 husband of Irene (Camuti) Bernard
- '68 father of Helen Hawekotte and Angela Hawekotte '75
- '70 Mary Ann (Hagberg) Putnam
- '72 husband of Helen (Ortiz) C'de Baca
- '72 Deborah Lasseter
- '73 husband of Dulce Martinez
- '73 Abel Torres
- '77 Susan (Owaki) Bierman
- '79 mother of Marie Mendiondo
- '81 mother of Joan (Peter) Noneman
- '84 Warren Ackerman, father of Laurie (Ackerman) Canning
- '84 Roby Gallagher MS, husband of Lawreen (Crain) Gallagher '65
- '87 father of Gayne Pinto
- '87 mother of Darcy Stoltz-Burke
- '99 Robert Jones
- '00 Joyce Ishizue
- '07 father of Virginia Guevara

They will be remembered in the Masses, prayers and good works of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Mount community.

## advanced degrees

The Alumnae Association congratulates the following alums for their successful pursuit of intellectual achievement:

- '86 Julie (King) Marhefka, MS in psychiatric nursing, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, May 2011
- '92 Theresa Yugar, PhD in women's studies and religion, Claremont Graduate University, 2012
- '98 Angila Romious, MA in demographics and social analysis, and PhD in environmental analysis and design, University of California, Irvine, 2009
- '06 Erica Huntzinger, project management certification, UCLA, May 2012
- '11 Melissa Cook, MBA, MSMC, December 2012

**NOTE:** We are proud of all of our alums and are happy to showcase your academic achievements. Please let us know when you receive an advanced degree and include the date and the name of the institution granting the degree. In order to keep this feature current, please do not go back any further than four years or send information that has already appeared in Class Notes.

## Remembering the Mount

Thinking of including the Mount in your estate plan? Please let us know. There are many ways to do this. We can help you decide which is best for you. Contact Cindy Hizami, director of planned giving, at 213.277.2740 or [chizami@msmc.la.edu](mailto:chizami@msmc.la.edu).

## Send us your photos

Share your special moments with the Mount community. Send photos of milestone anniversaries, engagements, weddings, births and significant trips to Elizabeth (Robles) Jimenez '03, director of alumnae relations, at [erobles@msmc.la.edu](mailto:erobles@msmc.la.edu).



## 2012 Outstanding Alums Award Winners



From left: Nancy Aguilar '94; Giovanna Brasfield '98; Tori Canillas-Dufau '99 MS, '01 MS, '05 MS; Joyce Centofanti '80; and Cynthia Hernandez '08.

### Joyce Michelina Centofanti '80

#### **Professional Achievement**

Since graduating with her bachelor of fine arts degree, Joyce Michelina Centofanti '80 has excelled in her career as a professional artist, a tenured professor of art, and a consultant and past president of the Colorado Art Education Association.

Centofanti has received numerous honors, including the Pacific Region's National Higher Education Art Educator of the Year award in 2009 from the National Art Education Association. She has exhibited her ceramic sculptures in more than 20 solo and 50 juried shows in museums and galleries across the U.S. and in Canada, China, Russia and Sweden.

Centofanti earned a master of fine arts degree from the University of Montana in 1984, a master's degree in special education from New Mexico Highlands University in 2000, and a PhD in fine arts and art education from Texas Tech University in 2002.

### Nancy Aguilar '04

#### **Service to the College**

Nancy Aguilar '04 is a member of the Latina Alumnae Network, a regular volunteer at Mount events and a strong advocate for higher education. From volunteering at phonathons to reading essays for scholarships and organizing cultural events, Aguilar is always helping others.

Aguilar is an educational advocate at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) in the Early Entrance Program. She also is closely involved in student retention through the Students Learning in Communities program at CSULA, where she works with at-risk, first-generation college students from disadvantaged backgrounds to help them

achieve academic success.

Aguilar earned both an associate degree in 2002 and a bachelor's degree in liberal arts in 2004 from the Mount. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in humanities at the College.

### Giovanna Brasfield '98

#### **Community Service**

Giovanna Brasfield '98 has worked extensively throughout Southern California to build up communities with her expertise in education, transportation, economic development and social issues. She has more than 13 years of experience in marketing, outreach, market research and business development, and is the community outreach manager at URS Corp.

She was the lead organizer for the south Los Angeles Jefferson office for the California Democratic Party in 2006, and received the John F. Kennedy Jr. Award for outstanding public service in 2007. She also was named Female Democrat of the Year for the 52nd state assembly district in 2008.

Brasfield earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing from the Mount, an MBA from the University of Phoenix in 2000, and two doctorate degrees from the University of La Verne: doctor of public administration in 2006, and doctor of education in organizational leadership in 2007.

### Cynthia Hernandez '08

#### **Rising Star**

Cynthia Hernandez has found the perfect fit for her young career as a speech and language teacher for children with hearing loss at the John Tracy Clinic of Los Angeles.

She has been using her Spanish language skills to help children and their families since her days as an intern at the clinic, before she graduated from the Mount with her bachelor's degree in child development.

Hernandez works with children as young as infants, helping them with speech, language and auditory skills. She teaches parents how to use auditory-verbal therapy, which focuses on listening skills rather than visual information and sign language.

She earned her master's degree in deaf education from California Lutheran University in 2011. Her thesis focused on "External Factors Affecting Late Language Development in Children with Hearing Loss."

**Spirit of Nursing Award**—*In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the College's Department of Nursing, the Alumnae Association and department faculty awarded the "Spirit of Nursing" award to an instructor who represents the best of nursing at the Mount.*

## **Tori Canillas-Dufau '99 MS, '01 MS, '05 MS**

### **Spirit of Nursing**

Tori Canillas-Dufau, or "Dr. Tori" to her students, has spent more than three decades in the fields of nursing, education, administration and mental health. The associate professor and registered nurse is constantly inspiring others to seek and achieve excellence in their personal and professional endeavors.

After teaching intermediate and advanced medical-surgical nursing at the pre-licensure level in the Mount's evening/weekend Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program for 15 years, Canillas-Dufau joined the faculty of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program in 2008. She is one of only 2,500 nurses in the country holding national accreditation as a certified nurse educator from the National League for Nursing.

She holds four master's degrees in the areas of health science, counseling psychology, educational administration and nursing. Additionally, she earned a doctorate in education from Pepperdine University.

## The dog governess, an unintended good deed

*By Teri Redman Kahn*

Several years ago my husband and I retired from our respective professions and, like most newly retired couples, wanted to travel the world. The problem was that we had three dogs. Boarding pets is very expensive and would significantly add to the cost of our travels, so I had to find a creative solution to our canine conundrum.

I came up with the idea of finding a college student who would want to live on the Westside and trade room and board for caring for our dogs. Since we live along Mandeville Canyon in Brentwood, Calif., the obvious choice was a student from Mount St. Mary's College. We have empty bedrooms and dog chores; that was our side of the swap. The student would benefit by staying near school at no cost and avoiding the arduous commute on Sunset Boulevard every night. I posted the position with the Commuter Services office at the College and waited for a call.

At first, no one called. Then one day a young woman phoned and spoke in a tiny soft voice. She said her name was Vashti and asked if she could come meet us to apply for the job. She arrived with her entire family. They were wonderful people. Warm and supportive, they wanted Vashti to complete college and go on to medical school. We hired Vashti on the spot and wondered why no one else had inquired about the position. It turned out that someone in Commuter Services knew how much Vashti loved dogs and so kept the listing from being posted. For us it was a match made in heaven.

Vashti lived in our daughter's bedroom for four years. When she graduated, she turned us over to her friend, Vivian. And after Vivian, we met Veronica. Yes, we do call them the "Three Vs."

We have kept in touch with our three graduates. During the summer, we had the Three V's over for dinner and chatted about the experience of living in our house. As we sipped our wine, we shared funny stories and laughed at how one of the dogs smells really bad and another urinates inside the house on a regular basis.

Then the girls started to open up about their own feelings and the deeper issues in their lives. They spoke of the struggle to succeed at a rigorous college program and still maintain all their family obligations. Each one said that if they had not lived in our home, they would not have graduated from Mount St. Mary's. The commute was simply too horrible and their hours at school too long. But, more than that, we served as role models of a way of life that was achievable through hard work and determination.

Sharing our home with these students has been wonderful for us, and it was a privilege to offer these young women a helping hand. ♣

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*Teri Redman Kahn lives in Brentwood, Calif.*



## JOIN US

### Alum Gatherings

Meet other alums in your area and discover what is currently happening at the College. The next alum gatherings will be held on April 6 in Long Beach, Calif.; May 11, Orange County, Calif.; May 18 in Seattle, Wash.; and May 19 in Portland, Ore. For more information, check out [www.msmcalums.la.edu](http://www.msmcalums.la.edu) or call 213.477.2767.

### Homecoming 2013

Save the date for this year's Homecoming: Nov. 2. The event will include workshops, lunch and plenty of time to reconnect with your Mount friends. For more information, call 213.477.2767.

### Toastmasters at the Mount

Looking to improve your public speaking skills? Toastmasters can help! Check out the MSMC Mount Masters Toastmasters Club. Learn to be an effective communicator, gain valuable leadership skills, make yourself more marketable. The club meets every first and third Wednesday at 11:45 a.m., Doheny Campus. For more information, visit [msmc.toastmastersclubs.org](http://msmc.toastmastersclubs.org) or contact Elizabeth (Robles) Jimenez '03 at 213.477.2769 or [erobles@msmc.la.edu](mailto:erobles@msmc.la.edu).

**This calendar represents only some of the events at Mount St. Mary's College. For more up-to-date listings, visit [www.msmc.la.edu](http://www.msmc.la.edu). For alum events, visit [www.msmcalums.la.edu](http://www.msmcalums.la.edu).**

## Alum Trip 2013: Explore the wonders of China

Described by Napoleon as a "sleeping giant," China is home to one of the world's oldest and largest civilizations. The fifth annual alum trip on Sept. 10-23 will explore Beijing's historic landmarks, including the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Great Wall and Tiananmen Square. A highlight of the trip will be a cruise down the Yangtze River through the Three Gorges Dam, including the Qutang and Wu gorges. The trip ends in Shanghai. To make your reservation or for more information, contact Jeanne (Redell) Ruiz '63 at 213.477.2512 or at [jaruiz@msmc.la.edu](mailto:jaruiz@msmc.la.edu).



## april

- 13 Alum Walking Tour, Los Angeles Union Station
- 18 Laurel Day, Doheny Campus
- 20 Mary's Day, Chalon Campus

## may

- 4 Golden Grad Luncheon and Baccalaureate Mass, Chalon Campus
- 6 Commencement, Gibson Ampitheatre
- 11 Doheny Mansion Public Tour

## june

- 5 Psychology Information Session, Doheny Campus
- 15 Humanities Information Session, Doheny Campus
- 22 MBA Information Session, Doheny Campus
- 22 Nursing Information Session, Doheny Campus

## july

- 27 Doheny Mansion Public Tour

## september

- 7 Women's Leadership Conference, Chalon Campus
- 10-23 Alum Trip to China

Nov 3

Dear Mr D

Here is the testimony for yesterday.

I have just seen Rice and he is planning to go to New York tonight and see you there tomorrow.

He is going to tell Smoot that the record must not be left as it is and that additional witnesses must be heard. It is unquestionably the intention that this be done as Admiral Robison has been called and not yet heard and Smoot has also told Bain that he is to be heard. I suggested to Rice that he should have Smoot call you, Dunn and me when the hearings are resumed.

Sincerely  
Cotter

A letter addressed to Edward L. Doheny, written in November 1923

## Rare letter found in college archives

A rare handwritten letter addressed to Edward L. Doheny was discovered last year in the College Archives. The letter was folded between the cover and front endpaper of an old corporate picture album. As many historians know, Doheny's papers are rare to nonexistent — which makes the College Archives discovery particularly exciting.

Doheny had a spectacular — and controversial — career as an oilman. Despite his own philanthropy and later that of his widow, Countess Estelle Doheny, Edward Doheny's legacy was tarnished by his connection to the Teapot Dome scandal in the mid-1920s, which involved the unlawful leasing of federally owned oil reserves to civilian drillers. Although Doheny was acquitted, the congressional hearings, federal trial and its aftermath turned into a family tragedy. The night Doheny died at age 79, on Sept. 8, 1935, Estelle Doheny burned all his personal and business papers in the basement of their mansion on Chester Place.

The handwritten letter is dated Nov. 3, addressed "Dear Mr. D" and signed "Cotter," updating Doheny on the day's round of congressional hearings. It mentions individuals who have been called to testify and advises Doheny on next steps, including a meeting with "Smoot." This was Sen. Reed Smoot of Utah, ranking member of the Senate public lands committee, who had just convened the Teapot Dome hearings on Oct. 23, 1923.

A month after the letter was written, in early December 1923, Doheny himself would be on the witness stand in Washington, D.C. Although it is only one yellowed page of hastily composed handwriting, the letter is more than an archival treasure. It marks the beginning of an important chapter in Los Angeles history. ♣

— Victoria McCargar, College Archivist





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